

**STAFF MEETING MINUTES
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING
ROOM 113
TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2002
9 A.M.**

Commissioners Present: Kathy Campbell, Chair
Bob Workman, Vice Chair
Larry Hudkins
Bernie Heier
Ray Stevens

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer
Dave Johnson, Deputy County Attorney
Dave Kroeker, Budget & Fiscal Officer
Bruce Medcalf, County Clerk
Trish Owen, Deputy County Clerk
Ann Taylor, County Clerk's Office

The Staff Meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM

**1 APPROVAL OF STAFF MEETING MINUTES OF TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 18, 2001 AND THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2001**

MOTION: Workman moved and Stevens seconded approval of the Staff Meeting minutes dated December 18, 2001 and December 20, 2001. Workman, Stevens, Heier, Hudkins and Campbell voted aye. Motion carried.

2 ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

A. Meeting Request from Cedars Youth Services

MOTION: Heier moved and Stevens seconded approval of the addition to the agenda. Heier, Stevens, Hudkins, Workman and Campbell voted aye. Motion carried.

3 JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY CHANGE ORDER NO. 4 FOR MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL; DETENTION FACILITY NATURAL GAS AND ELECTRIC BILLS - Chris Beardslee, Sinclair Hille & Associates Inc.; Gary Lange and Joe Maxwell, Alvine and Associates

Change Order No. 4

Chris Beardslee, Sinclair Hille & Associates Inc., reviewed a revised Change Order No. 4 for the Lancaster County Juvenile Detention Facility (Exhibit A).

Hudkins asked Beardslee to explain the justification for PR#034, deletion of gypsum wall board ceiling for all plumbing chases and deletion of fire sprinklers from the plumbing chases, other than in the staff secure area.

Beardslee said it was determined that the fire sprinklers were unnecessary as the plumbing chases are fireproofed enclosures and will not be used for storage. He said he had authorized the fire sprinklers to be placed in corridors instead and said a credit is reflected.

Hudkins said the decision should have been made by the Board, adding the cost was negligible in terms of added protection.

Beardslee said the cost savings were primarily due to the deletion of gypsum wall board ceiling from those spaces. He said the fire sprinklers could still be placed in the plumbing chases, but said he did not have a cost estimate.

MOTION: Hudkins moved and Heier seconded to accept the Change Order No. 4 items, with the exception of PR#034, and to request an estimate of the cost of retaining the fire sprinklers in the plumbing chases. Hudkins, Heier, Workman, Stevens and Campbell voted aye. Motion carried.

Natural Gas and Electric Bills

Beardslee said the contractor was responsible for the utility bills up to November 20, 2001, the date of substantial completion. The contractor has paid for readings past that date and will seek reimbursement from the County for those costs.

4 LANCASTER COUNTY CORRECTIONS NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND MASTER PLAN REPORT - Mike Thurber, Corrections Director; Terry Weber and Kent Griffith, Corrections; Kit Boesch, Human Services Administrator; Dave Voorhis, Voorhis/Robertson Justice Services; Amy Tejral, Mayor's Office

Dave Voorhis, Voorhis/Robertson Justice Services, gave an overview of *Lancaster County Nebraska Needs Assessment and Master Plan Report* (Exhibit B) and reviewed Summary of Recommendations (Pages 156-157) which covers system change, alternatives to incarceration and sanctions, and changes within the Department of Corrections.

Voorhis noted that the jail has been at capacity for some time and said several factors impact that population:

- Citation as an alternative to incarceration
- High number of "failures to appear", with warrants issued but not actively worked
- Lengthy court processing time
- Narrow list of alternative sanctions
- Judges lack adequate information

Voorhis said changes will be costly, but said the Board's stated intent to implement alternative sanctions is a good approach to the problem. He added that getting the low risk offenders into out-of-custody programs will be dependent upon cooperation, front end assessment and policy changes.

Workman noted that \$11 million in start-up costs and \$4 million in annual costs are projected. He said \$49 million in savings is also projected and asked Voorhis to estimate when the County will see these savings.

Voorhis said the projection of savings is based on an assumption that a new jail will not be constructed. He added that if the current population trend continues, a \$38 million bond issue for construction of a new jail facility will be necessary within the next two to three years. Voorhis predicted that the new facility will have double the capacity of the current facility and an annual operating cost of \$6 to \$8 million.

Hudkins asked Voorhis to address the issue of how to measure the success of alternative programs.

Voorhis said it is critical that individuals within the criminal justice system support each other, stating there will be errors. He noted that offenders can bond out of jail, if they have the funds to do so, and can commit additional offenses. Voorhis said "Our proposal is that they're under supervision, instead of just being out on bond."

Heier expressed concern with the following:

- Proposal to add an additional 26 staff members (Page 95)
- Age and condition of the current jail facility
- Need for improved booking procedures and better coordination with the Lincoln Police Department and County Sheriff's Office
- Order of alternatives to incarceration and sanctions (Page 156)

Voorhis said a suggested action plan, with target dates, is provided on Page 157. He stressed the need for a Criminal Justice Coordination Committee and suggested that a County Commissioner serve as a member. Voorhis said this committee can help the Board to determine priorities.

Campbell said it is crucial that the Board keeps pace with the justice community and suggested that the Board hold a series of work sessions, with the major stakeholders, to work through the report and develop an action plan.

Voorhis said the Corrections Department's Intake area and support spaces are serious problem areas. He recommended relocation of the Probation Department and expansion of the Intake area, stating this will provide the opportunity to add 110 beds for special management groups.

Kit Boesch, Human Services Administrator, questioned the suggested timetable for implementation, noting integration of the Management Information System (MIS) is not shown until Year Two and community services and implementation of day reporting are not shown until Years Two and Three of the action plan (Page 157). She said she believes it would be more beneficial to hire a Director of Alternative Programming outside the Corrections Department, rather than a Deputy Director within the Corrections Department, to develop and coordinate the new programs (Page 154). Boesch noted that it is recommended that the County hire a Home Detention Supervisor and seven Home Detention Officers and said this is a function of the Probation Office. She suggested that the County work with the State to increase the number of Probation Officers or assist the State with the cost of adding Probation Officers.

Mike Thurber, Corrections Director, said he believes pre-trial services need to be run with County focus in mind. He said it is crucial that the judges are provided the correct information and that Corrections is involved in maintaining the credibility of public safety. Thurber also reported that the Corrections Department will be out of compliance with Jail Standards effective August, 2002, due to overpopulation and staffing.

Boesch said the assessment piece is critical but said it should coordinate, but be separate from the Corrections Department. She added that assessment will not work unless alternative programs are in place.

Thurber said he believes assessment can be run by the Department of Corrections and said Pre-Trial Release is separate from Probation.

Voorhis said it is his recommendation that the authority of the Department of Corrections be expanded. He noted that the Probation Department is "strapped", in terms of finances and staffing, and only deals with sentenced offenders. Voorhis said the Department of Corrections is the good place for the programs and said this will provide the ability to move offenders through graduated sanctions.

Stevens suggested that the County Board of Corrections could serve as a coordinating council, direct implementation and draw in the necessary resources.

Campbell said the proposed Deputy Director/Coordinator (Page 123) could assist the Board in working through the recommendations and setting priorities. She asked whether there is anyone in the Corrections Department or the community that could serve in this capacity.

Thurber said a background in the adult correctional system is crucial.

Campbell suggested that the Board begin with the following system change recommendations:

- Fully develop Criminal Justice Coordination Committee (S-1) (Page 122)
- Implement Population Management Plan (S-2) (Page 123)

Campbell also suggested that the Chair and Vice Chair of the County Board of Corrections meet with the Justice Council to review the report and to inform them of how the Board plans to proceed. The Justice Council will be asked to appoint a subcommittee to participate in the Board's work sessions.

MOTION: Heier moved and Stevens seconded to authorize Mike Thurber, Corrections Director, to work with the Personnel Department in development of a job description for the Deputy Director/Coordinator position. Workman, Heier, Hudkins, Stevens and Campbell voted aye. Motion carried.

Campbell said the U.S. Attorney's Office has expressed interest in contributing financially to the construction of a new facility in exchange for maximum security beds for federal prisoners.

Board consensus was to request a written proposal from the U.S. Attorney's Office and to refrain from assurances at this time.

5 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REPORT

A. Committee Assignments and Officers

The Board will elect officers at the County Board of Commissioners Meeting scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on January 15, 2002.

The Board postponed discussion of committee assignments until the January 17, 2002 Staff Meeting.

B. Mid-Year Budget Retreat Agenda

The following agenda items were suggested:

- Rocking Dirt Road Policy
- Budget calendar
- Palm Pilot Policy
- Future of Attention Center facility
- Review of County properties and discussion of their future
- Strategic Planning
- Visitors Promotion Committee (VPC)

C. County Representative on Life Insurance Request for Proposals (RFP) Committee

The Board named Diane Staab, Deputy County Attorney, as its representative.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

A. Meeting Request from Cedars Youth Services

The Board agreed to meet with representatives from Cedars Youth Services on February 26, 2002 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to discuss programs. The location of the meeting is yet to be determined.

6 ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Stevens moved and Heier seconded to adjourn the meeting at 12:01 p.m. Stevens, Workman, Heier, Hudkins and Campbell voted aye. Motion carried.

Bruce Medcalf
County Clerk